



# BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **ILLEGAL STREET RACER SENTENCED Victims' Family Tells Judge of the Pointlessness of Street Racing Deaths**

Family members of the victims of convicted illegal street racer **Carlos Lee Hill, Jr.**, 20, of Oroville, addressed a crowded courtroom today to note the pointlessness of Hill's actions that caused the deaths of two adult victims and a two-year-old child, as well as major injuries to a fourth victim, four years old.

Several family members of victim Anthony Gaston spoke passionately in front of Judge Jesus Rodriguez, telling the court how Hill's reckless criminal actions had forever changed their lives, and decrying the pointlessness of what had happened. Some, from the east coast, gave their statements over the court's Zoom system.

"Everybody else paid the ultimate price," said Gaston's sister, telling the judge and Hill, as Hill sat emotionless in court, that Hill made a choice to race that day against Gaston, but her two-year-old niece had no such choice.

Gaston's mother, the grandmother of the deceased two-year-old, spoke last and told the judge, "I am so jealous that when all this is done, he (Hill) can still go home... but I'll never get to hold my son, never get to hold my granddaughter again." She also told the judge that there is "no glory in racing, only the possibility of death." Turning to Hill, she implored him to recognize the consequences of his reckless actions that day, telling him that "next time it could be your family suffering because you don't come home."

At the conclusion of the family's statements, Judge Rodriguez sentenced Hill to the upper term of 9 years and 4 months in state prison. As part of his sentence, Judge Rodriguez ordered restitution be paid by Hill to the family members for funeral expenses, lost wages, and ongoing counselling. Ramsey said that in total Hill was ordered to pay over \$81,000, with additional restitution to be determined when the final costs of medical treatment are determined for the surviving four-year-old.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said the case stemmed from an incident in late April of this year when Hill, driving a modified Camero, came upon Gaston, driving a Jeep SUV, on Lincoln Boulevard in South Oroville. Hill challenged Gaston to a high-speed drag race down Lincoln Boulevard, which ended when Gaston's Jeep crashed off the road, killing himself, his

front seat passenger Andrew Lockner, 18, of Oroville, and Gaston's two-year-old daughter in the rear. Gaston's four-year-old daughter, also in the rear, was seriously injured, but survived.

Hill had stopped his vehicle down the street and returned to see the destruction, but then fled the area.

Ramsey said that over the following weeks and months, CHP officers and a prosecutor from his office conducted an extensive investigation to piece together what had led up to the fatal crash. They located nearby surveillance cameras, witnesses, and physical evidence. Specialized officers and engineers with the CHP's Multidisciplinary Accident Investigation Team (MAIT) assisted in the investigation, ultimately determining Gaston's Jeep was travelling between 106-110 mph at the time of the crash.

Ramsey said the deaths and injuries in the case hit the close-knit community in south Oroville particularly hard, as many residents knew the victims and their families personally. Ramsey noted residents told his office that Hill was a known street racer in the area and felt that it was only a matter of time until a tragedy, such as occurred, would happen. Many had reported Hill's actions to authorities, but he would be gone when they arrived.

